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OPEN PEER REVIEW

Structural Equation Modeling of Suicidal Ideation and Behavior: A Three-Step Theory Perspective

Mohammad Saeed Mohammadi, Farzane Ahmadi, Amirhossein Rasouli, Hatef Tirgari Seraji, Abdoulhakim Tirgari, Omid Saed

SUBMITTED	REVISED	ACCEPTED	DOI
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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

More about open peer review: brieflands.com/knowledgebase/opr

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1 Original submission

5 comments · 6 Jun 2024 – 15 Jun 2024

Referee 1 Reviewer

REJECT 6 Jun 2024

I want to thank the esteemed author for submitting their article. Upon review, it's clear the paper has fundamental shortcomings and lacks quality writing and innovation. However, recommendations for improvement have been provided. Best wishes

Abstract:
1. Provide more detail on the selection criteria for participants, including demographic information such as age, gestational age, and previous mental health history, to enhance the study's reproducibility and generalizability.
2. Provide more detail on the selection criteria for participants, including demographic information such as age, gestational age, and previous mental health history, to enhance the study's reproducibility and generalizability.
3. Provide effect sizes with confidence intervals to enable readers to assess the magnitude and precision of treatment effects more accurately.
4. Provide practical recommendations for clinicians working with pregnant women experiencing anxiety and depressive symptoms, based on the study findings and clinical experience.

background
1. While the document provides a comprehensive overview of various theories related to suicide, including Beck's, Shneidman's, Durkheim's, Joiner's, and O'Connor's theories, ensure that each theory is discussed in sufficient detail to provide a clear understanding of its key principles and contributions to the field.
2. Synthesize findings from previous studies more effectively to provide context for the current research. For example, when discussing the prevalence of suicide attempts among Iranian students, integrate findings from multiple studies to provide a nuanced understanding of the issue.
3. Provide a more detailed explanation of the theoretical framework guiding the study, particularly the Three-Step Theory of Suicide. Elaborate on the key components of the theory and how they relate to the research objectives.

method
o Clearly outline the steps taken to ensure ethical compliance, including how virtual consent was obtained and anonymity maintained.
o Clarify how the research team handled cases where participants indicated a need for support or further assistance regarding their mental health.
o Provide references for previous studies that have validated the psychometric properties of the instruments, particularly in similar cultural contexts.
o Provide more detail on how reliability and validity analyses were conducted, including the specific procedures used for Cronbach's alpha calculation and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).
o Provide a step-by-step explanation of how the bootstrap method was applied to assess the significance of the mediating effects, including how confidence intervals were calculated and interpreted.

Results
• Provide more detailed information about the variables included in the analysis, such as their definitions and measurement scales.
• Clarify the significance levels of the correlations reported in Table 1 and ensure consistency in reporting significant correlations.

• Consider presenting the correlation matrix in addition to or instead of the summarized results in Table 1 to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of the relationships between variables.

Discussion
• Begin the discussion with a concise summary of the study's main findings and their implications for understanding suicidal behavior among Iranian students.
• Clearly outline how the study's results align with the Three-Step Theory of Suicide (3ST) and its assumptions, providing a structured framework for the discussion.
• Provide a thorough interpretation of each significant finding, explaining how they support or contribute to existing literature on suicidal behavior.
• Discuss any unexpected or contradictory findings and offer possible explanations or alternative interpretations.
• Compare and contrast the study's findings with previous research on suicidal behavior, particularly studies that have utilized the 3ST framework or similar theoretical perspectives.
• Highlight areas of convergence or divergence between the current study and existing literature, emphasizing the study's novel contributions to the field.
• Provide a comprehensive discussion of the study's limitations, including the cross-sectional design, sample characteristics, and measurement constraints.
• Discuss how these limitations may have influenced the interpretation of results and suggest directions for future research to address these limitations.
• Discuss the practical implications of the study's findings for suicide prevention interventions targeting Iranian students.
• Consider how the insights gained from the study can inform the development of culturally sensitive prevention strategies that address the specific risk factors identified in the study.
• Propose specific areas for future research based on the study's limitations and unanswered questions.
• Suggest potential research designs (e.g., longitudinal studies, clinical populations) and methodologies (e.g., broader assessment of connectedness) to address these gaps in knowledge.
• Conclude the discussion by summarizing the key findings, reiterating their importance for understanding suicidal behavior, and emphasizing the significance of the study's contributions to the field.
• Avoid introducing new information or analyses in the conclusion, focusing instead on summarizing and synthesizing the main points discussed in the section.

Tahereh Alsadat Mirghaemi Reviewer

ACCEPT 8 Jun 2024

Accepted.
Sincerely,

Referee 2 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 10 Jun 2024

Comments to the Author
Thank you for your hard work in revising your paper, and I would like to comment on the paper.

1- Your conceptual model is wrong. Correct the model by reading related articles.
2- The modeling method is not only a formal examination of the relationship between the variables. Please write in the introduction section what the conceptual relationship between the variables is.
3- Explain the method of determining the sample size.
4- According to the format of the IJPBS, modify the format of the references and mention the DOI.

5- State the demographic information of the sample.
6- State the psychometric indicators of the tools in others' studies and your own study.
7- Your fitted model is not available in the article.
8- Language problems are observed, and it seems that an English-speaking writer can help solve these problems to some extent.

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 10 Jun 2024

Reviewer 1
Accepted

Reviewer 2
Comments to the Author
Thank you for your hard work in revising your paper, and I would like to comment on the paper.

1- Your conceptual model is wrong; correct the model by reading related articles.
2- The modeling method is not only a formal examination of the relationship between the variables. Please write in the introduction section what the conceptual relationship between the variables is.
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5- State the demographic information of the sample.
6- State the psychometric indicators of the tools in others' studies and your own study.
7- Your fitted model is not available in the article.
8- Language problems are observed, and it seems that an English-speaking writer can help to solve this problem to some extent.

Reviewer 3
Rejected

I want to thank the esteemed author for submitting their article. Upon review, it's clear the paper has fundamental shortcomings and lacks quality writing and innovation. However, recommendations for improvement have been provided. Best wishes
Abstract:
1. Provide more detail on the selection criteria for participants, including demographic information such as age, gestational age, and previous mental health history, to enhance the study's reproducibility and generalizability.
2. Provide more detail on the selection criteria for participants, including demographic information such as age, gestational age, and previous mental health history, to enhance the study's reproducibility and generalizability.
3. Provide effect sizes with confidence intervals to enable readers to assess the magnitude and precision of treatment effects more accurately.
4. Provide practical recommendations for clinicians working with pregnant women experiencing anxiety and depressive symptoms, based on the study findings and clinical experience.
background
1. While the document provides a comprehensive overview of various theories related to suicide, including Beck's, Shneidman's, Durkheim's, Joiner's, and O'Connor's theories, ensure that each theory is discussed in sufficient detail to provide a clear understanding of its key principles and contributions to the field.
2. Synthesize findings from previous studies more effectively to provide context for the current research. For example, when discussing the prevalence of suicide attempts among Iranian students, integrate findings

from multiple studies to provide a nuanced understanding of the issue.
3. Provide a more detailed explanation of the theoretical framework guiding the study, particularly the Three-Step Theory of Suicide. Elaborate on the key components of the theory and how they relate to the research objectives.
method
o Clearly outline the steps taken to ensure ethical compliance, including how virtual consent was obtained and anonymity maintained.
o Clarify how the research team handled cases where participants indicated a need for support or further assistance regarding their mental health.
o Provide references for previous studies that have validated the psychometric properties of the instruments, particularly in similar cultural contexts.
o Provide more detail on how reliability and validity analyses were conducted, including the specific procedures used for Cronbach's alpha calculation and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).
o Provide a step-by-step explanation of how the bootstrap method was applied to assess the significance of the mediating effects, including how confidence intervals were calculated and interpreted.
Results
• Provide more detailed information about the variables included in the analysis, such as their definitions and measurement scales.
• Clarify the significance levels of the correlations reported in Table 1 and ensure consistency in reporting significant correlations.
• Consider presenting the correlation matrix in addition to or instead of the summarized results in Table 1 to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of the relationships between variables.
Discussion
• Begin the discussion with a concise summary of the study's main findings and their implications for understanding suicidal behavior among Iranian students.
• Clearly outline how the study's results align with the Three-Step Theory of Suicide (3ST) and its assumptions, providing a structured framework for the discussion.
• Provide a thorough interpretation of each significant finding, explaining how it supports or contributes to existing literature on suicidal behavior.
• Discuss any unexpected or contradictory findings and offer possible explanations or alternative interpretations.
• Compare and contrast the study's findings with previous research on suicidal behavior, particularly studies that have utilized the 3ST framework or similar theoretical perspectives.
• Highlight areas of convergence or divergence between the current study and existing literature, emphasizing the study's novel contributions to the field.
• Provide a comprehensive discussion of the study's limitations, including the cross-sectional design, sample characteristics, and measurement constraints.
• Discuss how these limitations may have influenced the interpretation of results and suggest directions for future research to address these limitations.
• Discuss the practical implications of the study's findings for suicide prevention interventions targeting Iranian students.
• Consider how the insights gained from the study can inform the development of culturally sensitive prevention strategies that address the specific risk factors identified in the study.
• Propose specific areas for future research based on the study's limitations and unanswered questions.
• Suggest potential research designs (e.g., longitudinal studies, clinical populations) and methodologies (e.g., broader assessment of connectedness) to address these gaps in knowledge.

• Conclude the discussion by summarizing the key findings, reiterating their importance for understanding suicidal behavior, and emphasizing the significance of the study's contributions to the field.
• Avoid introducing new information or analyses in the conclusion, focusing instead on summarizing and synthesizing the main points discussed in the section.

Editor-in-Chief MAJOR REVISION 15 Jun 2024

Thank you for submitting your manuscript for consideration for publication in the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Your paper has been evaluated by external peer reviewers. Please make revisions according to the reviewers' comments.

After revision, authors are obliged to upload a Word file containing the reviewers' comments and their responses to all comments, one by one.

Besides, please pay attention to the word count limitation:
Word count limits are declared in this link: http://kowsarpub.com/en/index.php/services/for-authors/895-word-count

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript. Thank you for sending your work to the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Revised text must be highlighted in the full manuscript file.

2

Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Response to Reviewer 1

Comments on Abstract:

[Comment 1]: Provide more detail on the selection criteria for participants, including demographic information such as age, gestational age, and previous mental health history, to enhance the study's reproducibility and generalizability.

Response: It appears that the reviewer's comment is not directly relevant to our study.

[Comment 2]: Provide more detail on the selection criteria for participants, including demographic information such as age, gestational age, and previous mental health history, to enhance the study's reproducibility and generalizability.

Response: This comment is repetitive.

[Comment 3]: Provide effect sizes with confidence intervals to enable readers to assess the magnitude and precision of treatment effects more accurately.

Response: It appears that the reviewer's comment is not directly relevant to our study.

[Comment 4]: Provide practical recommendations for clinicians working with pregnant women experiencing anxiety and depressive symptoms, based on the study findings and clinical experience.

Response: It appears that the reviewer's comment is not directly relevant to our study.

Comments on Background:

[Comment 1] While the document provides a comprehensive overview of various theories related to suicide, including Beck's, Shneidman's, Durkheim's, Joiner's, and O'Connor's theories, ensure that each theory is discussed in sufficient detail to provide a clear understanding of its key principles and contributions to the field.

Response: Thank you for your kind comment, the key principles of each of the theories are explained in the text, but in order to prevent the introduction from becoming longer, the detailed examination of the theories has been omitted.

[Comment 2] Synthesize findings from previous studies more effectively to provide context for the current research. For example, when discussing the prevalence of suicide attempts among Iranian students, integrate findings from multiple studies to provide a nuanced understandings of the issue.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 3] Provide a more detailed explanation of the theoretical framework guiding the study, particulary the Three-step theory of suicide. Elaborate on the key components of the theory and how they relate to the research objectives.

Response: Thank you for your comment; the general framework and components of the three-stage theory are explained in detail in paragraph 4.

Comments on Method:

[Comment 1]: Clearly outline the steps taken to ensure ethical compliance, including how virtual consent was obtained and anonymity maintained.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 2]: Clarify how the research team handled cases where participants indicated a need for support or further assistance regarding their mental health.

Response: Students who reported suicidal ideation or scored highly on the mental health screening questionnaire were referred for a free psychiatric consultation at the hospital's clinic.

[Comment 3]: Provide references for previous studies that have validated the psychometric properties of the instruments, particularly in similar cultural contexts.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 4]: Provide more detail on how reliability and validity analyses were conducted, including the specific procedures used for Cronbach's alpha calculation and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Response: The alpha reliabilities of the questionnaires were reported, and the modeling procedures are described in detail in the manuscript.

[Comment 5]: Provide a step-by-step explanation of how the bootstrap method was applied to assess the significance of the mediating effects, including how confidence intervals were calculated and interpreted.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

Comments on results:

[Comment 1]: Provide more detailed information about the variables included in the analysis, such as their definitions and measurement scales.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 2]: Clarify the significance levels of the correlations reported in Table 1 and ensure consistency in reporting significant correlations.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 3]: Consider presenting the correlation matrix in addition to or instead of the summarized results in Table 1 to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of the relationships between variables.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

Comments on Discussion:

[Comment 1]: Begin the discussion with a concise summary of the study's main findings and their implications for understanding suicidal behavior among Iranian students.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 2]: Clearly outline how the study's results align with the Three-Step Theory of Suicide (3ST) and its assumptions, providing a structured framework for the discussion.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 3]: Provide a thorough interpretation of each significant finding, explaining how they support or contribute to existing literature on suicidal behavior.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 4]: Discuss any unexpected or contradictory findings and offer possible explanations or alternative interpretations.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 5]: Compare and contrast the study's findings with previous research on suicidal behavior, particularly studies that have utilized the 3ST framework or similar theoretical perspectives.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 6]: Highlight areas of convergence or divergence between the current study and existing literature, emphasizing the study's novel contributions to the field.

Response: This study demonstrates the applicability of the three-step theory in explaining the relationships between model elements in non-clinical populations. Another distinguishing feature of this study is that it was conducted in a non-suicidal student population.

[Comment 7]: Provide a comprehensive discussion of the study's limitations, including the cross-sectional design, sample characteristics, and measurement constraints.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 8]: Discuss how these limitations may have influenced the interpretation of results and suggest directions for future research to address these limitations.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 9]: Discuss the practical implications of the study's findings for suicide prevention interventions targeting Iranian students.

Response: Thank you for your kind comment, this part is mentioned in the last paragraph of the Discussion

[Comment 10]: Consider how the insights gained from the study can inform the development of culturally sensitive prevention strategies that address the specific risk factors identified in the study.

Response: Thank you for your comment, while cultural aspects were not directly investigated in this study, the findings demonstrate the model's validity within the Iranian student population.

[Comment 11]: Propose specific areas for future research based on the study's limitations and unanswered questions.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 12]: Suggest potential research designs (e.g., longitudinal studies, clinical populations) and methodologies (e.g., broader assessment of connectedness) to address these gaps in knowledge.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 13]: Conclude the discussion by summarizing the key findings, reiterating their importance for understanding suicidal behavior, and emphasizing the significance of the study's contributions to the field.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 14]: Avoid introducing new information or analyses in the conclusion, focusing instead on summarizing and synthesizing the main points discussed in the section.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

Response to Reviewer 2

Thank you very much for your review.

Response to Reviewer 3

[Comments 1] Your conceptual model is wrong, correct the model by reading related articles.

Response: Thank you for your comment; We reviewed the model and modified it based on the 3-step model

[Comment 2] The modeling method is not only a formal examination of the relationship between the variables. Please write in the introduction section what is the conceptual relationship of the variables.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The conceptual relationship between variables is thoroughly explained in the introduction and in the first 5 lines of paragraph 4, based on the 3-step theory.

[Comment 3] Explain the method of determining the sample size

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 4] According to the format of the IJPBS, modify the format of the references and mention the doi.

Response: Thanks for your reminder, the format of the references has been modified and Doi has been added.

[Comment 5] State the demographic information of the sample.

Response: The study included a limited number of demographic variables, which are therefore reported in the Participants section of the manuscript.

[Comment 6] State the psychometric indicators of the tools in others' studies and your own study.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

[Comment 7] Your fitted model is not available in the article.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder; the fitted model was added.

[Comment 8] Language problems are observed and it seems that the English-speaking writer can help to solve this problem to some extent.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder; the passage was revised accordingly

2 Revision 1

4 comments · 3 Jul 2024 – 8 Jul 2024

Narges Rouhi Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 3 Jul 2024

-Please elaborate on how your research differs from the existing body of similar research.

-In the discussion section, it is suggested that you include some recommendations for policymaking and practical implications for mental health clinicians, in addition to the research needs already mentioned. (What is the public health significance of this article?)

Referee 1 Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 5 Jul 2024

I would like to extend my appreciation for the effort you have invested in this work. The revisions do not meet the criteria. Further modifications are encouraged. Best of luck.

Abstract:
• Consider replacing "remains a significant public health concern globally" with a more concise and impactful statement, such as "constitutes a major global public health burden."
• Quantify the "substantial" contribution to mortality and morbidity by citing relevant statistics (e.g., mortality rates).
• Instead of "present a Structural Equation Modeling," rephrase to explicitly state the purpose of the modeling, such as "investigate the relationships between suicidal ideation, behaviors, and the three-step theory constructs within a student population."
• Strengthen the description of the sample by mentioning the recruitment strategy (e.g., random sampling, convenience sampling) and the educational level of the students (e.g., high school, university).
• Briefly mention the specific subscales of the SCL-25 used in the analysis.
• Instead of "psychache," use the more specific term "psychic pain" for clarity.
• Consider reporting specific correlation coefficients (e.g., r values) for the significant correlations between variables.
• Quantify the "strong" direct predictors by mentioning the standardized path coefficients (β) for suicidal ideation and low belongingness on suicidal behaviors.
• Briefly state the limitations of the study (e.g., cross-sectional design, limited generalizability).
• Emphasize the potential implications of the findings for suicide prevention strategies among students.

Introduction
• The current opening sentence simply defines suicide. Consider a more impactful opening that grabs the reader's attention and highlights the significance of the research.
• You could use a startling statistic, a powerful quote, or a specific example related to student suicide.
• While the statistics on suicide are important, consider condensing them slightly.
• Focus on the specific problem of student suicide in Iran, perhaps highlighting a recent trend or a gap in existing knowledge.
• Cite relevant studies on student suicide prevalence in Iran.
• To enhance the quality of your introduction, consider incorporating the following references:
http://jpcp.uswr.ac.ir/browse.php?a_id=474&slc_lang=en&sid=1&ftxt=1&html=1
https://brieflands.com/articles/ijhrba-

82012#:~:text=Results%3A,neurofeedback%20sustained%20after%20one%20month.
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42380-024-00211-2

• You've provided a good overview of historical suicide theories.
• Now, delve deeper into the limitations of these theories in differentiating between suicidal thoughts and actions.
• Briefly explain the concept of the ideation-to-action framework.
• Provide a more concise explanation of the 3ST's core constructs (psychache, hopelessness, connectedness, capacity).
• You can mention the four goals of suicide prevention based on 3ST later when discussing the study's significance.
• You've already mentioned its novelty and limited exploration with students. Perhaps elaborate on how it aligns with the specific context of Iranian students.
• Clearly state the research aims, mentioning investigating the structural dynamics of suicide using 3ST within the Iranian student population.
• Ensure smooth transitions between paragraphs.
• Consider using subheadings to improve readability.
• Ensure proper in-text citation formatting for all references.

Methods
• While you've mentioned the sample size and demographic characteristics, consider providing more details relevant to the research question.
• Did you include students with a history of mental health issues?
• Please explain how the study size was arrived at.
• The research paper should clearly state its ethical considerations.
• Further clarification is needed to explain the sampling methods used.
• Were there any specific inclusion/exclusion criteria related to suicidal ideation or attempts?
• Briefly mention the content of the informed consent form, highlighting aspects like the voluntary nature of participation, anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw.
• Briefly summarize the purpose of each instrument and its relevance to the study.
• You can mention the psychometric properties (e.g., Cronbach's Alpha) in a separate paragraph or table.
• Briefly explain the rationale for each data analysis method used.
• For example, mention why Cronbach's Alpha is used for reliability and CFA for validity.

Results:
• Briefly summarize the main results for descriptive statistics and correlations, highlighting significant relationships between variables.
• Instead of just reporting correlation coefficients (r), explain their strength and direction (e.g., strong positive correlation).
• You can mention the cutoff values used to categorize correlation strength (e.g., weak, moderate, strong).
• Explain what a specific path coefficient value (e.g., 0.318) means in the context of the relationship between variables.
• Avoid redundancy and overly technical language.
• Use clear and concise sentences to present your findings.
• Separate the results for descriptive statistics and correlations from the SEM results.
• Each section can start with a brief introduction summarizing the analysis performed and then present the key findings.

Discussion:
• Briefly restate the research question and the theoretical framework (3ST) used in the study.

• Briefly summarize the main findings for each stage of the 3ST, emphasizing the supporting evidence and any contradictions.
• Briefly explain each limitation, but focus on its impact on the findings and the generalizability of your results.
• Elaborate on the practical implications of your findings for suicide prevention interventions in student populations.
• Be specific about how the 3ST can inform intervention strategies targeting psychache, hope, and connectedness.
• Briefly summarize the main contribution of your study and its significance for understanding student suicide.

Associate Editor

MINOR REVISION 6 Jul 2024

Reviewer 1
I would like to extend my appreciation for the effort you have invested in this work. The revisions do not meet the criteria. Further modifications are encouraged. Best of luck.
Abstract:
• Consider replacing "remains a significant public health concern globally" with a more concise and impactful statement, such as "constitutes a major global public health burden."
• Quantify the "substantial" contribution to mortality and morbidity by citing relevant statistics (e.g., mortality rates).
• Instead of "present a Structural Equation Modeling," rephrase to explicitly state the purpose of the modeling, such as "investigate the relationships between suicidal ideation, behaviors, and the three-step theory constructs within a student population."
• Strengthen the description of the sample by mentioning the recruitment strategy (e.g., random sampling, convenience sampling) and the educational level of the students (e.g., high school, university).
• Briefly mention the specific subscales of the SCL-25 used in the analysis.
• Instead of "psych ache," use the more specific term "psychic pain" for clarity.
• Consider reporting specific correlation coefficients (e.g., r values) for the significant correlations between variables.
• Quantify the "strong" direct predictors by mentioning the standardized path coefficients (β) for suicidal ideation and low belongingness on suicidal behaviors.
• Briefly state the limitations of the study (e.g., cross-sectional design, limited generalizability).
• Emphasize the potential implications of the findings for suicide prevention strategies among students.
Introduction
• The current opening sentence simply defines suicide. Consider a more impactful opening that grabs the reader's attention and highlights the significance of the research.
• You could use a startling statistic, a powerful quote, or a specific example related to student suicide.
• While the statistics on suicide are important, consider condensing them slightly.
• Focus on the specific problem of student suicide in Iran, perhaps highlighting a recent trend or a gap in existing knowledge.
• Cite relevant studies on student suicide prevalence in Iran.
• To enhance the quality of your introduction, consider incorporating the following references:
http://jpcp.uswr.ac.ir/browse.php?a_id=474&slc_lang=en&sid=1&ftxt=1&html=1
https://brieflands.com/articles/ijhrba-82012#:~:text=Results%3A,neurofeedback%20sustained%20after%20one%20month.
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42380-024-00211-2

• You've provided a good overview of historical suicide theories.
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• Briefly explain the concept of the ideation-to-action framework.
• Provide a more concise explanation of the 3ST's core constructs (psychache, hopelessness, connectedness, capacity).
• You can mention the four goals of suicide prevention based on 3ST later when discussing the study's significance.
• You've already mentioned its novelty and limited exploration with students. Perhaps elaborate on how it aligns with the specific context of Iranian students.
• Clearly state the research aims, mentioning investigating the structural dynamics of suicide using 3ST within the Iranian student population.
• Ensure smooth transitions between paragraphs.
• Consider using subheadings to improve readability.
• Ensure proper in-text citation formatting for all references.
Methods
• While you've mentioned the sample size and demographic characteristics, consider providing more details relevant to the research question.
• Did you include students with a history of mental health issues?
• Please explain how the study size was arrived at.
• The research paper should clearly state its ethical considerations.
• Further clarification is needed to explain the sampling methods used.
• Were there any specific inclusion/exclusion criteria related to suicidal ideation or attempts?
• Briefly mention the content of the informed consent form, highlighting aspects like the voluntary nature of participation, anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw.
• Briefly summarize the purpose of each instrument and its relevance to the study.
• You can mention the psychometric properties (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) in a separate paragraph or table.
• Briefly explain the rationale for each data analysis method used.
• For example, mention why Cronbach's alpha is used for reliability and CFA for validity.
Results:
• Briefly summarize the main results for descriptive statistics and correlations, highlighting significant relationships between variables.
• Instead of just reporting correlation coefficients (r), explain their strength and direction (e.g., strong positive correlation).
• You can mention the cutoff values used to categorize correlation strength (e.g., weak, moderate, strong).
• Explain what a specific path coefficient value (e.g., 0.318) means in the context of the relationship between variables.
• Avoid redundancy and overly technical language.
• Use clear and concise sentences to present your findings.
• Separate the results for descriptive statistics and correlations from the SEM results.
• Each section can start with a brief introduction summarizing the analysis performed and then present the key findings.
Discussion:
• Briefly restate the research question and the theoretical framework (3ST) used in the study.
• Briefly summarize the main findings for each stage of the 3ST, emphasizing the supporting evidence and any contradictions.

• Briefly explain each limitation, but focus on its impact on the findings and the generalizability of your results.
• Elaborate on the practical implications of your findings for suicide prevention interventions in student populations.
• Be specific about how the 3ST can inform intervention strategies targeting psychache, hope, and connectedness.
• Briefly summarize the main contribution of your study and its significance for understanding student suicide.
Decision:
Minor revision

Reviewer 2
Please elaborate on how your research differs from the existing body of similar research.
-In the discussion section, it would be suggested to include some recommendations for policymaking and practical implications for mental health clinicians, in addition to the research needs already mentioned. (What is the public health significance of this article?)
Decision:
Minor revision

Editor-in-Chief MINOR REVISION 8 Jul 2024

Thank you for your recent revisions.
Your paper has now been evaluated again. According to the reviewers' and associate editor's comments, it needs some more revisions. Please make your revisions according to these comments. The full manuscript file must be highlighted to indicate revised text.

3

Revision 2

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Response to Reviewer 1

[Comment 1]: please elaborate on your research distinction among the existing similar body of research

Response: This study is the first to examine this theory in Iranian students, and more details will be provided in the last paragraph Background of the article.

[Comment 2]: In the discussion section it would be suggested to include some recommendations for the policy making and practical implications for the mental health clinicians, besides the mentioned needed research. (What is the public health significance of this article?)

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, The clinical implications are discussed in the final paragraph of the article.

Response to Reviewer 2

I would like to extend my appreciation for the effort you have invested in this work. Revisions not meeting criteria. Further modifications are encouraged. Best of luck.

Comments on Abstract:

• Consider replacing "remains a significant public health concern globally" with a more concise and impactful statement, such as "constitutes a major global public health burden."

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly.

• Quantify the "substantial" contribution to mortality and morbidity by citing relevant statistics (e.g., mortality rates).

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly.

• Instead of "present a Structural Equation Modeling," rephrase to explicitly state the purpose of the modeling, such as "investigate the relationships between suicidal ideation, behaviors, and the three-step theory constructs within a student population."

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly.

• Strengthen the description of the sample by mentioning the recruitment strategy (e.g., random sampling, convenience sampling) and the educational level of the students (e.g., high school, university).

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly.

• Briefly mention the specific subscales of the SCL-25 used in the analysis.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, SCL-25 and its subscales were not used in the analysis and only its overall score was used to differentiate between healthy people and people with psychiatric disorders.

• Instead of "psychache," use the more specific term "psychic pain" for clarity.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, In most articles, the term "pain" is used to refer to "psychic pain." We have followed the same procedure in this article.

• Consider reporting specific correlation coefficients (e.g., r values) for the significant correlations between variables.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, unfortunately, due to the word limit in the abstract section, it is not possible to add more items.

• Quantify the "strong" direct predictors by mentioning the standardized path coefficients (β) for suicidal ideation and low belongingness on suicidal behaviors.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, path coefficient values have been added to the abstract section.

• Briefly state the limitations of the study (e.g., cross-sectional design, limited generalizability).

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, due to the word limit in the abstract section, it is not possible to add more items. the limitations of the study are written in the discussion section of the article

• Emphasize the potential implications of the findings for suicide prevention strategies among students.

Response: These studies can help in the direction of preventive actions

Comments on Introduction:

• The current opening sentence simply defines suicide. Consider a more impactful opening that grabs the reader's attention and highlights the significance of the research.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, we considering this.

• You could use a startling statistic, a powerful quote, or a specific example related to student suicide.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, statistics related to student suicides are stated in paragraph 2

• While the statistics on suicide are important, consider condensing them slightly.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, statistics related to student suicides are stated in paragraph 2

• Focus on the specific problem of student suicide in Iran, perhaps highlighting a recent trend or a gap in existing knowledge.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, studies in the general population are scarce, and in the student population, they are even rarer.

• Cite relevant studies on student suicide prevalence in Iran

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

• To enhance the quality of your introduction, consider incorporating the following references:

http://jpcp.uswr.ac.ir/browse.php?a_id=474&slc_lang=en&sid=1&ftxt=1&html=1

https://brieflands.com/articles/ijhrba-82012#:~:text=Results%3A,neurofeedback%20sustained%20after%20one%20month.

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42380-024-00211-2

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, One of the references introduced by you was added to the article, but the other two were not related to our study

• You've provided a good overview of historical suicide theories. Now, delve deeper into the limitations of these theories in differentiating between suicidal thoughts and actions.

Response: Thank you for your kind reminder, limitations are mentioned in the third paragraph of the introduction

• Briefly explain the concept of the ideation-to-action framework.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

• Provide a more concise explanation of the 3ST's core constructs (psychache, hopelessness, connectedness, capacity).

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

• You can mention the four goals of suicide prevention based on 3ST later when discussing the study's significance.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

• You've already mentioned its novelty and limited exploration with students. Perhaps elaborate on how it aligns with the specific context of Iranian students.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, This model is novel both in the international student population and the Iranian context, and has not been previously investigated.

• Clearly state the research aims, mentioning investigating the structural dynamics of suicide using 3ST within the Iranian student population.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

• Ensure smooth transitions between paragraphs.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

• Consider using subheadings to improve readability.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We will take this into consideration.

• Ensure proper in-text citation formatting for all references.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, the article has been referenced according to the Vancouver-brieflands referencing style.

Comments on Methods

• While you've mentioned the sample size and demographic characteristics, consider providing more details relevant to the research question.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, all available demographic variables have been presented in the text of the article. Additionaly we excluded 110 individuals with a history of suicide attempts. And 9 individuals with psychiatric issue.

• Did you include students with a history of mental health issues?

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, Based on a question in the demographic questionnaire, we excluded people with a history of suicide attempts and psychiatric issue.

• please explain how the study size was arrived at.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, As this study was conducted online, we did not have any incomplete questionnaires or missing data. We only excluded data that met the exclusion criteria, as explained in the " Procedure" section.

• The research paper should clearly state its ethical considerations.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, these items have been presented in the article and highlighted in yellow in the " Procedure" section.

• Further clarification is needed to explain the sampling methods used.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, this item has been added to the Participants section.

• Were there any specific inclusion/exclusion criteria related to suicidal ideation or attempts?

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, all inclusion and exclusion criteria are listed in the article. As mentioned, individuals with a history of suicide attempts were excluded from the study.

• Briefly mention the content of the informed consent form, highlighting aspects like the voluntary nature, anonymity, confidentiality, and right to withdraw.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, these items have been presented in the article and highlighted in yellow in the " Procedure" section.

• Briefly summarize the purpose of each instrument and its relevance to the study.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, the purpose for the use and application of the questionnaires is provided in the "Instruments" section.

• You can mention the psychometric properties (e.g., Cronbach's Alpha) in a separate paragraph or table.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, psychometric properties (e.g., Cronbach's Alpha) adds in table.

• Briefly explain the rationale for each data analysis method used. For example, mention why Cronbach's Alpha is used for reliability and CFA for validity.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, These issues have been fully addressed in the Data analysis section. Unfortunately, the word count limitation does not allow us to add any further details.

Comments on Results:

• Briefly summarize the main results for descriptive statistics and correlations, highlighting significant relationships between variables.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, These issues have been fully addressed in the results section. Unfortunately, the word count limitation does not allow us to add any further details.

• Instead of just reporting correlation coefficients (r), explain their strength and direction (e.g., strong positive correlation). You can mention the cut-off values used to categorize correlation strength (e.g., weak, moderate, strong).

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, These issues have been fully addressed in the results section.

• Explain what a specific path coefficient value (e.g., 0.318) means in the context of the relationship between variables.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, these items have been presented in the article and highlighted in yellow in the " SEM model results" section.

• Avoid redundancy and overly technical language. Use clear and concise sentences to present your findings.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, this section was revised accordingly

• Separate the results for descriptive statistics and correlations from the SEM results.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder, this results are separate

• Each section can start with a brief introduction summarizing the analysis performed and then present the key findings.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion, Unfortunately, the word count limitation does not allow us to add any further details.

Comments on Discussion:

• Briefly restate the research question and the theoretical framework (3ST) used in the study.

Response: Thank you for your nice reminder this section was revised accordingly

• Briefly summarize the main findings for each stage of the 3ST, emphasizing the supporting evidence and any contradictions.

Response: Thank you for your kind reminder, This has been addressed throughout the discussion section.

• Briefly explain each limitation, but focus on its impact on the findings and the generalizability of your results.

Response: Thank you for your kind reminder, limitations addressed throughout the discussion section.

• Elaborate on the practical implications of your findings for suicide prevention interventions in student populations.

Response: Thank you for your kind reminder, The clinical implications are discussed in the final paragraph of the article.

• Be specific about how the 3ST can inform intervention strategies targeting psychache, hope, and connectedness.

Response: Thank you for your kind reminder, The current study examined the significance of each of the constructs of connectedness, psychache, and hopelessness in the prediction of suicide, and based on the results, targeting any of these constructs could potentially prevent suicide among students. How interventions could be implemented to improve these constructs was beyond the scope of the current study, and future research is warranted to address this.

• Briefly summarize the main contribution of your study and its significance for understanding student suicide.

Response: Thank you for your kind reminder, This study contributed to the understanding of suicide among students through a modeling approach.

3 Revision 2

4 comments · 23 Jul 2024 – 28 Jul 2024

Narges Rouhi Reviewer — ACCEPT — 23 Jul 2024

The comments were included in the text accordingly.

Fatemeh Esmaili Reviewer — ACCEPT — 26 Jul 2024

Make minor revisions.

Associate Editor — MINOR REVISION — 27 Jul 2024

Reviewer 1
After reviewing the changes made by the authors, I can see that they have attended to the revisions appropriately and the manuscript seems acceptable for publication in this form.

Decision:
Accept
Reviewer 2
Public Comment:
The comments were included in the text accordingly.

Decision:
Accept

Reviewer 3
Public Comment:
Make minor revisions.

Decision:
Accept

Editor-in-Chief — MINOR REVISION — 28 Jul 2024

Thank you for your recent revisions.
Your paper has now been evaluated again. According to the associate editor's comments, it needs some more revisions. Please make your revisions according to these comments. The full manuscript file must be highlighted to indicate revised text.

4

Revision 3

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Response to Reviewer 1

Reviewer 1

After reviewing the changes made by the authors, I can see that they have attended to the revisions appropriately and the manuscript seems acceptable to be published within this form.

Decision: Accept

Response: Thank you for taking the time to review our manuscript and for providing your valuable feedback. We appreciate your insightful comments and suggestions, which have helped us to improve the quality of our work.

Response to Reviewer 2

the comments were included in the text accordingly

Decision: Accept

Response: Thank you for taking the time to review our manuscript and for providing your valuable feedback. We appreciate your insightful comments and suggestions, which have helped us to improve the quality of our work.

Response to Reviewer 3

Decision: Accept

Response: Minor revisions have been made and the issues raised have been addressed. Thank you for taking the time to review our manuscript and for providing your valuable feedback. We appreciate your insightful comments and suggestions, which have helped us to improve the quality of our work.

4 Revision 3

2 comments · 15 Aug 2024 – 24 Aug 2024

Associate Editor

ACCEPT 15 Aug 2024

Dear authors
After reviewing the changes made by the authors, I can see that they have attended to the revisions appropriately, and the manuscript seems acceptable for publication.
Regards

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 24 Aug 2024

We have completed our review of your manuscript and are pleased to inform you that it is being considered for publication in the IJPBS. Note that the publication of your article will only be finalized upon your cooperation with the editorial process.
Thank you for your fine contribution. On behalf of the Editors of IJPBS, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal.